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TO: IMMEDIATE ROUTINE MEA BRIEF.

[REDACTED] b3

SUBJECT: MEA BRIEF [REDACTED] FOR 03 SEPTEMBER 1986. b3

FROM: DDI/O/CPAS

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10. IN BRIEF

1. BANGLADESH: PREPARING FOR PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION
PRESIDENT ERSHAD IS SETTING THE STAGE FOR THE PRESIDENTIAL

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Date JUN 1999

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ELECTION TO BE HELD IN MID-OCTOBER AND AN END TO MARTIAL LAW, BUT THE OPPOSITION IS LIKELY TO POSE OBSTACLES TO HIS PLANS.

THE BANGLADESH GOVERNMENT ANNOUNCED YESTERDAY THAT PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS WOULD BE HELD ON 15 OCTOBER.

ERSHAD ALSO VOLUNTARILY RETIRED FROM THE MILITARY ON 31 AUGUST AND RELINQUISHED HIS POST AS ARMY CHIEF OF STAFF TO MAJ GEN. ATIAUR RAHMAN, BANGLADESH'S MOST SENIOR ARMY OFFICER. ERSHAD STILL HOLDS THE POSTS OF CHIEF MARTIAL LAW ADMINISTRATOR AND COMMANDER IN CHIEF OF THE ARMED FORCES, BUT THE CONSTITUTION REQUIRED HIM TO RESIGN FROM THE ARMY TO RUN IN THE PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION.

MEANWHILE, THE PARLIAMENTARY OPPOSITION, HEADED BY THE LEFT-OF-CENTER AWAMI LEAGUE, HELD A SIX-HOUR NATIONAL STRIKE MONDAY TO DEMAND THE IMMEDIATE LIFTING OF MARTIAL LAW AND TO PROTEST THE RESULTS OF BYELECTIONS ON 26 AUGUST FOR EIGHT PARLIAMENTARY SEATS. THE JATIYO PARTY WON ALL EIGHT SEATS, BUT THE OPPOSITION CHARGES THAT THE VOTING WAS RIGGED AND HAS DEMANDED A NEW VOTE.

ERSHAD SEES THE PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION--WHICH HE WOULD ALMOST CERTAINLY WIN--AS A MEANS TO INSTITUTIONALIZE HIS RULE. HIS TURNING OVER OF THE POWERFUL POST OF ARMY CHIEF OF STAFF TO RAHMAN SUGGESTS THAT ERSHAD IS CONFIDENT HE RETAINS THE ARMY'S SUPPORT. RAHMAN SUFFERS FROM PHYSICAL ILLMENTS AND WILL PROBABLY SERVE ONLY ON AN INTERIM BASIS.

ERSHAD IS LIKELY TO CALL PARLIAMENT INTO SESSION LATER THIS MONTH TO VOTE ON THE BILL THAT WOULD LEGITIMIZE HIS MARTIAL LAW ORDERS. ALTHOUGH THE AWAMI LEAGUE AND OTHER OPPOSITION PARTIES HAVE REFUSED TO APPROVE SUCH A BILL, THE GOVERNMENT CAN PROBABLY GATHER THE NECESSARY TWO-THIRDS VOTE TO APPROVE PASSAGE.

THE CONTINUED AGITATION BY THE OPPOSITION REFLECTS THE LIKELIHOOD OF ITS BOYCOTTING THE ELECTION IF ERSHAD DOES NOT FIRST LIFT MARTIAL LAW. ERSHAD, THEREFORE, MAY APPROVE AN EARLIER LIFTING OF MARTIAL LAW AS SOON AS PARLIAMENT PASSES THE RATIFICATION BILL IN ORDER TO HAVE A CREDIBLE ELECTION OPPONENT IN OCTOBER.

2. SOUTHERN AFRICA-US: FRONTLINE STATES FRUSTRATION

RECENT CALLS BY INCREASINGLY FRUSTRATED LEADERS OF THE FRONTLINE STATES FOR CLOSER COLLABORATION WITH THE US REFLECT UNREALISTIC EXPECTATIONS THAT THE WEST COULD PROVIDE A QUICK FIX IN SOUTH AFRICA.

FRONTLINE LEADERS AGREED IN LUANDA LAST WEEK TO A VAGUE PROGRAM OF ACTION AGAINST SOUTH AFRICA THAT INCLUDES PUSHING FOR OUTSIDE DIPLOMATIC AND ECONOMIC AID TO NEIGHBORING STATES. THE LEADERS, HOWEVER, WERE UNABLE TO REACH AGREEMENT ON THE IMPOSITION OF SANCTIONS.

DIFFERENCES AMONG THE FRONTLINE STATES ARE EVIDENT ON OTHER REGIONAL ISSUES. BOTSWANA CONTINUES TO EXPRESS AFRICAN NATIONAL

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CONGRESS MEMBERS AND AVOIDS CRITICIZING PRETORIA, BUT NEITHER ZAMBIA NOR ZIMBABWE IS CURBING ITS SUPPORT FOR ANTI-SOUTH AFRICAN INSURGENTS OR RHETORICAL ATTACKS ON PRETORIA.

THE CALLS FOR CLOSER COLLABORATION WITH THE US ON SOUTH AFRICA AND THE UNREALISTIC EXPECTATIONS THAT THE WEST CAN GET QUICK RESULTS REFLECT A GROWING SENSE OF FRUSTRATION. SOME FRONTLINE LEADERS HOPE FOR A SOLUTION LIKE THE LANCASTER HOUSE CONFERENCE THAT LED TO BLACK MAJORITY RULE IN ZIMBABWE. THE CALLS BY SOME FRONTLINE LEADERS, HOWEVER, SUGGEST THEY BELIEVE THAT COMPREHENSIVE WORLDWIDE SANCTIONS WOULD SHUT DOWN SOUTH AFRICA'S ECONOMY AND FORCE PRETORIA TO THE BARGAINING TABLE.

3. FRANCE-LEBANON: UNIFIL CONTROVERSY

RECENT FIGHTING BETWEEN FRANCE'S UNIFIL CONTINGENT AND AMAL MILITIAS IN LEBANON IS FORCING PARIS TO RECONSIDER ITS POSITION ON UNIFIL.

PRIME MINISTER CHIRAC AND DEFENSE MINISTER GIRAUD ARE CONSIDERING WITHDRAWING FRANCE'S 1,400-MAN CONTINGENT DESPITE PUBLIC STATEMENTS TO THE CONTRARY.

CHIRAC RECENTLY CALLED FOR A REVIEW OF UNIFIL'S MANDATE AND SAID THAT FRENCH TROOPS HOLD AN UNTENABLE POSITION AND ARE HOSTAGES ON THE GROUND.

CHIRAC ALMOST CERTAINLY BELIEVES THAT HEIGHTENED TENSIONS BETWEEN THE UNIFIL TROOPS AND AMAL MILITIAS--PERHAPS SUPPORTED BY PRO-IRANIAN HIZBALLAH ELEMENTS--MAY ENDANGER FRENCH HOSTAGES IN LEBANON. HE ALSO PROBABLY FEARS THAT IF UNIFIL TROOPS ARE KILLED PUBLIC OPINION WOULD TURN SHARPLY CRITICAL OF HIS EFFORTS TO SECURE THE RELEASE OF FRENCH HOSTAGES BY NORMALIZING RELATIONS WITH TEHRAN. CHIRAC, WHO HAS APPARENTLY CONSOLIDATED CONTROL OVER HOSTAGE NEGOTIATIONS, PROBABLY HAS NOT YET DECIDED TO WITHDRAW FRENCH TROOPS BUT IS LIKELY TO CONSIDER REDUCING THE FRENCH COMMITMENT TO UNIFIL IF THE UN DOES NOT UNDERTAKE TO PROTECT THE TROOPS AND IF FIGHTING CONTINUES. MITTERRAND IS UNLIKELY TO CONFRONT CHIRAC ON THE ISSUE.

HIZBALLAH PROBABLY INTENDS TO EXPAND ITS ATTACKS ON WESTERNERS IN UN FORCES, PARTICULARLY THE FRENCH.

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4. INTERNATIONAL: NICARAGUAN BID FOR NAM CHAIRMANSHIP

NICARAGUA'S BID TO CHAIR THE NONALIGNED MOVEMENT IN 1989 IS BEING MET WITH GROWING OPPOSITION. MANAGUA HAS RECOMMENDED TO ZIMBABWE, THE CURRENT CHAIRMAN, THAT IT PREVENT THE ISSUE FROM BEING TAKEN UP UNTIL THE 1988 FOREIGN MINISTERS' MEETING. LAST WEEK SEVERAL LATIN AMERICAN MEMBERS--ARGENTINA, BOLIVIA, COLOMBIA, JAMAICA, PANAMA, AND PERU--EXPRESSED RESERVATION TO NICARAGUA'S CANDIDACY. ZIMBABWE'S PRIME MINISTER MUGABE PLANS TO AVOID FORMAL DISCUSSION OF THE ISSUE DURING THE MEETING, WHICH ENDS SATURDAY.

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SEVERAL COUNTRIES HAVE INDICATED THEIR PREFERENCE FOR POSTPONING THE CHAIRMANSHIP DECISION, AND MUGABE CAN AVOID RESOLVING THE ISSUE THROUGH PARLIAMENTARY MANEUVERING. MANAGUA MAY STILL PRESS ITS CANDIDACY, HOWEVER, HOPING THAT MEMBERS WILL NOT PUBLICLY OPPOSE IT. MEETINGS EARLIER THIS WEEK INVOLVING CUBA, PERU, AND NICARAGUA MAY INDICATE A PLAN TO SELECT PERU'S PRESIDENT GARCIA AS THE NEXT CHAIRMAN IN EXCHANGE FOR HARsher ANTI-US LANGUAGE IN THE CENTRAL AMERICAN SECTION OF THE COMMUNIQUE.

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5. SOUTH AFRICA: OPPOSITION RALLIES

BLACK LEADERS ARE PLANNING A MASS PUBLIC FUNERAL TOMORROW IN SOWETO TOWNSHIP FOR BLACKS KILLED IN THE CLASH WITH POLICE LAST WEEK. THE ORGANIZERS, INCLUDING THE UNITED DEMOCRATIC FRONT AND THE CONGRESS OF SOUTH AFRICAN TRADE UNIONS, HAVE NOT COMPLETED PLANS BUT HAVE INVITED WHITE ANTIAPARTHEID GROUPS TO PARTICIPATE. PRETORIA PROBABLY WILL PLACE RESTRICTIONS ON THE GATHERING BUT NOT PROHIBIT IT.

B1, B3

THE FUNERAL COULD BECOME THE LARGEST DEMONSTRATION SINCE THE STATE OF EMERGENCY WAS IMPOSED, AND BOTH SIDES ARE LIKELY TO SEE IT AS AN IMPORTANT TEST. RESTIVE BLACKS ANXIOUS TO CHALLENGE THE GOVERNMENT WILL REGARD THE EVENT AS AN IMPORTANT ACT OF DEFIANCE AND WILL BE LOOKING FOR SIGNS OF HOW MUCH PROTEST PRETORIA WILL TOLERATE. THE GOVERNMENT PROBABLY HOPES THAT PERMISSION TO HOLD THE FUNERAL, COUPLED WITH A SHOW OF FIRMFNESS, WILL EASE TENSIONS IN SOWETO. A HEAVY SECURITY PRESENCE IS CERTAIN, BUT SECURITY FORCES PROBABLY WILL BE INSTRUCTED TO EXERCISE RESTRAINT IN AN EFFORT TO AVOID VIOLENCE.

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7. LEBANON: SHIA BICKERING OVER UNIFIL

A RECENT WAVE OF ATTACKS AGAINST THE UN INTERIM FORCES IN LEBANON DEMONSTRATES THE MAINSTREAM SHIA AMAL'S DIFFICULTY IN CONTROLLING EXTREMIST ELEMENTS WITHIN ITS MOVEMENT IN SOUTHERN LEBANON AND THE HARDENING OF THE PRO-IRANIAN HIZBALLAH'S ATTITUDE TOWARD THE PEACEKEEPING FORCE. MOST ATTACKS HAVE BEEN DIRECTED PRIMARILY AGAINST THE FRENCH CONTINGENT, BUT NORWEGIAN, IRISH, AND FIJIAN UNITS HAVE ALSO BEEN ATTACKED, ACCORDING TO LEBANESE PRESS REPORTS.

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COMMENT: THE ATTACKS ON UNIFIL ARE BYPRODUCTS OF THE HIZBALLAH-AMAL RIVALRY IN SOUTHERN LEBANON AND ARE LIKELY TO INTENSIFY, ESPECIALLY IF HIZBALLAH SPIRITUAL LEADER MUHAMMAD HUSAYN FADLALLAH PUBLICLY ENDORSES THEM. THEY ALSO REFLECT HIZBALLAH'S GROWING BELIEF THAT ITS AGGRESSIVE CAMPAIGN AGAINST AMAL AND THE ISRAELI PRESENCE IN SOUTHERN LEBANON IS BEGINNING TO PAY OFF. THE NATIONS REPRESENTED IN UNIFIL ARE INCREASINGLY CONCERNED ABOUT THE VIOLENCE AND ARE RECONSIDERING THEIR COMMITMENT TO STAY IN SOUTHERN LEBANON.

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9. AFGHANISTAN: REGIME PLANS RESETTLEMENT

KABUL APPARENTLY HOPES TO REDUCE SUPPORT FOR THE INSURGENTS AND CONSTRICT SUPPLY ROUTES BY RELOCATING 30,000 FAMILIES FROM THE EASTERN BORDER TO THE SPARSELY SETTLED WESTERN PROVINCES.

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63 [REDACTED] b3
[REDACTED] A TOP AFGHAN GOVERNMENT OFFICIAL CLAIMS
THAT OVERPOPULATION AND SURPLUS LABOR IN THE EAST ARE BEHIND THE
DECISION. HE ALSO SAID THE REGIME WILL NOT RELY STRICTLY ON
VOLUNTARY MOVEMENT BUT THAT IT WILL NOT USE FORCE. THE GOVERNMENT
HAS NOT ANNOUNCED WHEN THE RESETTLEMENT WILL BEGIN. b3

63 [REDACTED] HEAVY FIGHTING AND BOMBING ATTACKS IN KEY REGIONS IN
THE EAST HAVE ALREADY DEPOPULATED MANY AREAS, ALTHOUGH SUPPORT FOR
THE INSURGENTS REMAINS SIGNIFICANT. THE FAMILIES THAT HAVE NOT FLED
ARE NOT LIKELY TO MOVE VOLUNTARILY, HOWEVER, AND THE GOVERNMENT WILL
ALMOST CERTAINLY HAVE TO USE FORCE TO ACCOMPLISH ITS GOALS. FORCIBLE
RELOCATION WOULD PROBABLY PROMPT MANY OF THOSE AFFECTED TO FLEE TO
PAKISTAN. [REDACTED]

10. IN BRIEF

MIDDLE EAST

[REDACTED] b1, b3
--HIGH-LEVEL MILITARY, MINISTERIAL CHANGES IN MAURITANIA
REGIME'S MAJOR PRO-LIBYAN MINISTER OUSTED, PRESIDENTIAL
CONFIDANT TRANSFERRED TO INTERIOR MINISTRY . . . INCREASED
COUP PLOTTING LIKELY. [REDACTED] b3

AFRICA

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SOUTH ASIA
[REDACTED] b1, b3

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